



Xerces Update

Donor Newsletter of the Xerces Society

February 2017

Dear Friends,

Over the last decade, thanks largely to Xerces' efforts, invertebrate protection is driving change in mainstream conservation. In 2017, we will support our federal agency partners and expand our work with state, county, city, and park departments across the United States, and continue to offer outreach and education to farmers, gardeners, and concerned citizens, to maintain the momentum.

By empowering all of you to take action, we can increase our impact exponentially. Whether we ensure that freshwater mussels are protected as a highway bridge is repaired in Northern California, provide input for a statewide pollinator plan for Pennsylvania, advocate for pesticide policies in our local communities, or build a pollinator garden in a vacant urban lot, together our efforts lead to lasting change. THANK YOU for your participation and support.

"The wildlife and its habitat cannot speak, so we must and we will."

– President Theodore Roosevelt



The loss of milkweed is a major factor in the tumbling population of the monarch butterfly. Much effort has been put into restoring milkweed, and rightly so. However, adult monarchs need nectar to fuel them during spring migration and breeding, and to build up stores of fat to sustain them during fall migration and winter. Working with the Monarch Joint Venture and the National Wildlife Federation, the Xerces Society developed a series of 15 regional monarch nectar plant guides for the continental U.S. Each guide highlights species that are native, hardy, or relatively easy to grow. Find the plant lists on our website, www.xerces.org. (Photo: Xerces Society/Sarah Foltz Jordan.)

Connect, learn, discover

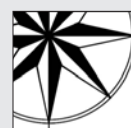
Our website contains a wealth of information about our work and what you can do to help invertebrates. Articles and updates are posted to our blog and you can sign up for our e-newsletter. You can also connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and now Instagram too!

www.xerces.org

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Protecting Bees from Pesticides

In recent months, Xerces scientists released two new publications about pesticides and bees. The first of these is a report about neonicotinoids, a group of insecticides used widely on farms and in urban landscapes, and the role they play in bee declines. This issue remains unsettled in the minds of many people, in part because pesticide companies adopted the strategy used so successfully by the tobacco industry and climate change deniers, one of amplifying small uncertainties to sow seeds of doubt about the research or the motives of scientists.

To bring clarity to the debate, the Xerces Society published *How Neonicotinoids Can Kill Bees*. The report provides an in-depth look at the science behind these insecticides, reviewing hundreds of research articles and distilling them down to create a clear picture of the effects these pesticides have on bees. There is no doubt that neonicotinoids harm bees and change their behaviors. The report is illustrated with photos and graphics that explain key information, making the research approachable to all.

Read the full report and download recommendations on how to reduce the impacts of these insecticides at <http://www.xerces.org/neonicotinoids-and-bees/>

The second publication is an 8-page guide to protecting habitat from pesticide contamination. The fact sheet includes an overview of which pesticides provide the greatest threat and steps to take to minimize the risk to bees, butterflies, and other invertebrates. Adopting integrated pest management methodologies that reduce reliance on pesticides is central to protecting habitat. Also, considering exposure to pesticides when deciding where to create new habitat and maintaining a spray-free buffer will help whether it is new or established habitat.

Download the fact sheet at <http://www.xerces.org/pesticides/agricultural-pesticide-use/>



Neonicotinoids in the Environment

Neonicotinoids are found throughout the landscape in areas where they were not directly applied. Here are three ways neonicotinoids interact with the environment and can impact invertebrates:



Plant Uptake

Plants take up neonicotinoids, spreading the chemical through plant tissues, potentially exposing insects that contact pollen, nectar, or other plant tissue.



Dust From Coated Seed

Neonicotinoids are released in dust from coated seeds during mechanized planting. This dust can move off-site, exposing bees or contaminating non-target sites.



Persistence

Most neonicotinoids are long-lived, persisting for months to years after an application. Shrubs and trees may remain harmful and residues in soil can be taken up by new plants.

MONTHLY GIVING

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...and our deepest gratitude.

Join the movement at
xerces.org/donate



Xerces staff lead a bee monitoring workshop in a recently restored pollinator meadow. (Photo: The Xerces Society/Matthew Shepherd.)

LOCAL ACTION

Protecting Invertebrates in Your Community

If you are reading this, you are likely aware of the many challenges facing invertebrates. Pollinators everywhere suffer from loss of habitat and widespread use of pesticides. Monarchs have seen record population declines in recent years. Some bumble bees are at high risk of extinction. Freshwater mussels are disappearing from creeks across the U.S.

In the face of such news, it's easy to become overwhelmed, and feel paralyzed by a sense of powerlessness. But here's a secret: you are more powerful than you think.

Think about the lands you have influence over. Are you a homeowner with a large suburban lot? An apartment dweller with a community garden plot—or planters on your deck? Chances are you live in a city with parks, schools, and municipal properties, as well as streams and watersheds that run throughout your community, managed by local officials and authorities. With some thought and care, all of these places can provide valuable habitat for bees, butterflies, and other invertebrates.

The Xerces website, www.xerces.org, offers a wealth of information on what you can do, including:

- ⇒ practical guidance such as plant lists for your pollinator garden,
- ⇒ information about insecticides and how to advocate for reduced use in your community,
- ⇒ details of citizen science projects you can participate in,
- ⇒ access to books—and much more.

If you're not online, give us a call or drop us a note; we can send you fact sheets and other information.

Are you better with a pen than a shovel? Write to your local officials and news outlets and make the case for protecting invertebrates. Talk to friends, neighbors, and community groups—become an advocate for invertebrates. You may even earn a new nickname as “the butterfly lady” or “that bee guy” in the process!

We will continue to work for positive change, but it will take all of us to protect invertebrates and their habitats. Local action is as important as any national campaign—and invertebrates are the perfect focus for small-scale conservation. ***Make 2017 your year of action.***

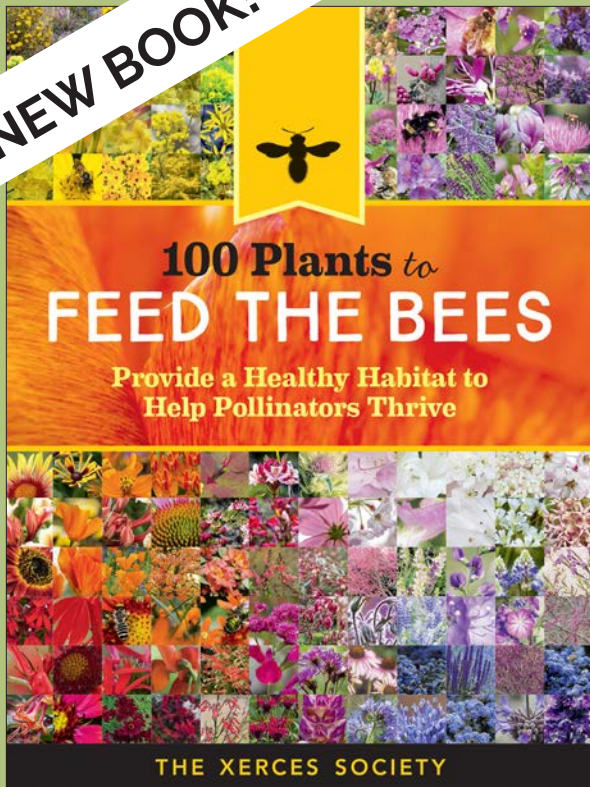
Thank you for taking a stand!

Neighbors join together to install plastic to control weeds by solarization in preparation for pollinator habitat. (Photo: Kerry Lynch.)



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NEW BOOK!



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Xerces in the media

Washington Post, 2/10/2017

Trump administration puts off listing bumble bee as endangered

"This species is critically imperiled and needs protection," [Rich Hatfield of the Xerces Society] said. "I'm hopeful that the administration will recognize the importance that pollinators play for food security in this country."

National Wildlife Magazine, 11/28/2016

Peril at Journey's End

"This longer-term approach is needed," says Scott Black, executive director of the Xerces Society and Monarch Joint Venture co-chair. "But if the Mexican government does not stem logging and deal with mining, there may be no monarchs to move uphill by 2030."

The Guardian (Britain), 12/11/2016

Bee's knees: a new \$4m effort aims to stop the death spiral of honeybees

On the 33-acre Prairie Drifter Farm in central Minnesota, farmers Joan and Nick Olson are cultivating more than just organic vegetables. . . . As part of a 2013 project by Xerces Society, a nonprofit that specializes in wildlife preservation, the Olsons worked with a biologist to figure out what types of flowers and shrubs to plant to attract bees, butterflies and other insects that pollinate plants.

